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What to do if you test positive for COVID-19

OLYMPIA –The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) is offering a detailed reminder about what people should do if they test positive for COVID-19. Cases are rising sharply, driven by the omicron variant, which is believed to be more contagious than previous variants, including delta. Tracking cases and preventing further spread of disease starts with testing; anyone with any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or known exposures should get tested, regardless of vaccination status or prior infection.

What to do if you test positive:

- Follow the [latest CDC and DOH guidance](#) and isolate at home, away from others
 - People who test positive should isolate.
 - All close contacts should quarantine.
- Wear a mask while inside and ask others in your home to do the same (preferably a KN95, KF-94, or a 3-ply surgical mask, if possible).
 - There are often gaps when masks are ill-fitting. Knot ear loops where they join the face to improve the mask fit.
 - You may also double mask to tamp down gaps.
 - [Watch a short video demonstration about how to adjust masks to fit better.](#)
- [Ventilate your space](#) as much as you can.
 - Set the fan of your heating system to “on” or “high” instead of “auto”.
 - If your home has an HVAC system, make sure it has a fresh filter and change it according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
 - Open the windows briefly to allow fresh air in, when possible.
- [Use WA Notify to report your positive home test](#), if applicable.
- Reach out to your close contacts and let them know they’ve been exposed and that they should quarantine.

- Stay hydrated, use over the counter medications such as acetaminophen to stay comfortable and manage symptoms.
- Seek medical care if you display the following symptoms:
 - Trouble breathing
 - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
 - Confusion, Inability to wake or stay awake
 - Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds (or an abnormally low reading on a pulse oximeter, if you have one).

With New Year's celebrations on the horizon, people should consider avoiding large crowds, and anyone who tests positive should stay home. People looking for where to get tested should visit the [Testing Locator](#) page on the DOH website. Locations are listed by region. People should also consider [activating WA Notify on their smart phones, which anonymously sends alerts to people who have been exposed](#).

“As cases continue to rise, people may need a reminder of what to do if they test positive,” said Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett, MD, MPH, Chief Science Officer. “We hope this is a helpful guide and reminds people of all the tools we have in our toolbox to protect ourselves, as individuals, our families, and our communities.”

Vaccination is still the best defense against COVID-19, especially severe disease. Everyone 16 and over is eligible for a booster, and children 5 and over should start their two-dose series immediately.

The [DOH website](#) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. [Find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#). Sign up for the DOH blog, [Public Health Connection](#).

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